

# Starflower Living

*Naturally*

www.starflowerpress.com

Issue One/June 27, 2014

*New Moon in Cancer*



*Sacred  
Sexuality*

Floation Therapy

Vegetarian Recipes

New Moon in Cancer

Finding your  
beautiful voice

*The Wise Crone  
Conscious Menopause*

*Calendula*

Earth Medicine | Gardening by the Moon | Growing Bolder

# Welcome

Planting Seeds: New Moon intentions	4	Herbal Healing: Calendula	20
Pilgrimage to the Crone	6	Floataion Therapy	22
Dancing with the Silver Crown	12	Vegetarian Recipes	25
Gardening by the Moon	14	Sacred Sexuality	26
Earth Medicine	15	The Knight in Shining Armour	32
Star Thrower: making a difference	16	Beauty is in the Ear	35
Start the day in a good mood	19		



## Home Sweet Home

Welcome to the launch issue of *Starflower Living, Naturally*, a New Moon publication.

Our purpose is two-fold: to provide insightful articles on holistic living, and to introduce you to the publications by Starflower Press. As editors, we look forward to sharing this journey with you.

Why the name *Starflower Living*? Starflower is also known as borage. It comes from the Celtic word *borrach*, which means courage. It is known to bring happiness and raise the spirits. We hope that *Starflower Living* brings you monthly inspiration to live a courageous, heart-centred life.

This New Moon is in Cancer: a key theme of this zodiac sign is *home*. We live in rural Cumbria in the beautiful Eden Valley. Our family nest, which we've nurtured, nourished and protected for more than eighteen years, is on the verge of witnessing a major change as our daughter leaves home in September to begin a music degree at university. Her journey out into the world impacts each family member. Our hope is that no matter where our daughters travel to in this world, they will always have fond memories of our times together, and cherish what home means to them. One of the things the nest archetype has to teach all of us is that it is a place to lay our feathers, and make ourselves comfortable for nurturing and being nurtured. But *all* of this safety and security has one purpose: to give us everything we need for our growth so that when we eventually take flight, we do so with the affirmation that we have been truly loved.

Cancer is ruled by the Moon, and so we have chosen several Moon images for this issue.

Each month, on the New Moon, we will offer you ideas on the themes of that zodiac sign, and how you can use that energy to set intentions and create a mindful hand-crafted life.

May this New Moon give you an opportunity to be reminded of all you hold dear about your home and family.

~ Veronika and Paul Robinson, editors

### Starflower Living

Published by Starflower Press  
www.starflowerpress.com  
ISSN: 2055-8244 (online)  
© Starflower Press  
© All contributors retain their copyright. Please contact them if you wish to reproduce their work.

Starflower Press  
Croft House,  
Glassonby, near Penrith,  
CA10 1DU, Cumbria, UK  
e: [office@starflowerpress.com](mailto:office@starflowerpress.com)  
+44 (0)1768 897 121

#### Editors

Veronika & Paul Robinson  
e: [veronikarobinson@hotmail.com](mailto:veronikarobinson@hotmail.com)

#### Issue One

June 27th, New Moon in Cancer

#### Declaration:

The purpose of *Starflower Living* is to disseminate information on natural living to support people in these changing times. Our ethos is based on integrity, passion and right livelihood.

Unsolicited submissions may be sent to: [office@starflowerpress.com](mailto:office@starflowerpress.com)  
No advertorials, please.

We also welcome artwork and photographs.

#### Images

Istock  
Shutterstock  
Calico Health and Wellbeing  
Sara Simon  
[www.sarasimon.co.uk](http://www.sarasimon.co.uk)  
Michelle Maiden  
[www.elementalotherworld.com](http://www.elementalotherworld.com)

Issue 2  
New Moon in Leo  
26th July

# New Moon in Cancer



The New Moon rises at dawn and sets at sunset. Because of the brightness of the Sun, we don't see the Moon on the day of the New Moon.

As the Moon rises between 15 and 50 minutes later each night, we see a sliver of Moon in a day or two, just after sunset, hanging low in the western sky.

The Moon finds herself right at home in the tender sign of Cancer, as it is the natural ruler of this zodiac sign. The Cancerian Moon is about bringing ourselves in touch with the feelings and moods of others. The key word for Cancer is home. Cancer likes to hold onto the past, and that includes home, people and things. Familiarity is paramount. Cancer is represented by the crab, a creature with a tough shell but sensitive and tender insides. It never moves forward, but approaches everything by moving sideways.

Our ancestresses recognised the effect of the Moon on our life, and this cellular knowing is still within us. The monthly New Moon is a wonderful time to write intentions or wishes. Using the theme of the zodiac sign, we can become more in tune with our heart's desires.

Ideally, the best time to make these wishes or intentions is within eight hours of the time of the New Moon (after it has occurred, not before). However, some people feel that anytime within that week is fine. Write or state your wishes in the present affirmative, such as *I am...* or *I have...* or *I easily find...* Write up to ten wishes.

Examples of Cancerian-themed wishes include security, safety, nurturing, family, home, ancestry, mothering, feelings/emotions, caring, protecting, intimacy.

The Moon enters a new zodiac sign approximately every two days. Each sign carries its own energy. Tapping into the energy of the current Moon sign allows us to live more rhythmically, as well as understanding the way our emotions can fluctuate.

- Soldier's Moon: Aries
- Builder's Moon: Taurus
- Scribe's Moon: Gemini
- Shield-Father's Moon: Cancer
- King's Moon: Leo
- Weaver's Moon: Virgo
- Ambassador's Moon: Libra
- Witch's Moon: Scorpio
- Philosopher's Moon: Sagittarius
- Grandfather's Moon: Capricorn
- Apostle's Moon: Aquarius
- Moon of the Angels of Mercy: Pisces



Cancer New Moon is also known as: Mother's daughter Moon

## The Nest



**Every bird likes his own nest best.  
Romanian Proverb**

With this new Moon falling on the 5th degree of Cancer, we find the Sabian Symbol means: *'the nest'*.

Ways in which we might see this manifesting in our lives include: the question of whether to rent or own a property; building a home; the need to feel safe, and creating the space for that; nurturing people, pets and plants; protecting endangered habitats; decorating your home; landlords/tenants; noisy neighbours; nesting instinct; finding ways to get money in order to feel secure.

It may also show up as being fearful to leave your comfort zone; taking over other people's space; not feeling wanted in the nest; feeling vulnerable; housework being a drudgery.

*\*The Sabian Symbols are an interpretation of each of the 360 degrees of the zodiac.*

### Examples of Cancer New Moon wishes

- I am happy and at ease in my home.
- I easily attract a new buyer for my house.
- I am enjoying making my home a safe and beautiful place for me and my family.
- I find myself living in my ideal home.
- I am healed of any issues associated with: my breasts/tumour/stomach/chest/ulcer/digestion/pancreas.
- I am easily attracting the right healthcare professionals and healers for me.
- I am always guided to the right information for my health.
- I am finding new ways to consciously share my feelings in ways that are healthy for all concerned.
- I am aware of other people's feelings, and allow myself to care about them.
- I am creating caring and intimate relationships.
- I am growing and learning and finding new ways to bring positivity to my relationships.
- I am happily nourishing my family.
- I am finding new ways to manage my financial life so that me and my family can have stability.
- I allow myself to feel secure.

# Pilgrimage to the Crone



by Teresa Maria Bilowus

*Teresa Maria Bilowus is a facilitator of workshops and retreats pertaining to Women's Blood Mysteries. She is a Menstruality Empowerment Activist. Teresa facilitates Red Tent Bournemouth (Dorset, UK), and is the founder of Moon Girl Warriors, a powerful coming-of-age mentorship program for girls. Teresa is passionate about giving voice to womb-space wisdom, and educating women on the rites-of-passage from menarche to menopause. She studies metaphysics and is a freelance writer. Teresa is the inspired mother of two phenomenal daughters. She can be contacted at: returntotheredtent@gmail.com*

It is inevitable that at some point all women will hear Her call.

Powerful Sorceress. The Old Veiled One. Queen of the Night. Hag. Dark Goddess. The Crone. Her voice is raspy, magnetic, certain and all-powerful. Her calling, unmistakable. She who has experienced the many cycles of life - the births and deaths of projects, relationships, children and dreams - arrives to call all women on a sacred journey. Her call is insistent. It comes with the cessation of monthly bleeding, and it offers women tremendous opportunity for deep immersion into the Ancient Wisdom Teachings. Her call hails the commencement of great transformation. Our society calls it menopause. But among women who are now intimate with The Wise Woman Elder, it is spoken of as The Pilgrimage.

Like all great voyages, there can be grave peril when pilgrimaging to the Crone. The pathway through menopause is often challenging to navigate. Roads and passages may seem impossible to cross. This is a holy journey fraught with difficulty and darkness.

The Crone is represented in the darkest phase of the Moon, and therefore holds a mysterious element. Something undefined. Once women are called to Her, they must continually bring their own awareness to the journey. It is through this commitment to self-awareness, and an unrepentant devotion to radical

self-care, that women are able to experience hallowed inner landscapes previously unimagined.

In many indigenous cultures, it is understood that women must complete their blood lessons before transitioning to the Crone. If this is not done during the bleeding years then it must be done at menopause. Blood lessons are life lessons. They are the way in which the Crone ripens the fruits of women's lives. This Goddess of Wisdom, Keeper of the Ancient Knowledge, is unafraid to live a fierce feminine life. She has stared death in the face and yet still draws breath. She has been to the utter depths of darkness and has crawled her way back to the light. The Crone is a deliberate way of being. She follows Her own authority. She is the difficult truth-speaker who no longer cares what others think of Her. The Crone knows that She has lived. She brings with Her an undercurrent of trouble by representing all that is deemed unacceptable in womankind. The Crone has knowledge to share so that wisdom can survive into the future. Hers is no longer a personal story, but a deep calling toward planetary contribution and healing.

Cultural negativity surrounding The Pilgrimage to the Crone means that menopause is rarely spoken of outside the sterilised rhetoric of the medical industry. Obsessed as we are with youth-orientated culture, there has been little support for women to honour the sacredness of this journey. With such little dialogue around menopause, many women often mistake the Crone's calling for serious illness. So we see this vital rite-of-passage reduced to a medical condition requiring external management and pacification. But the Crone is repulsed by this forced and unnatural interference in the journey of women. She who is powerful, wild, robust, raw and juicy is also unmanageable. She will not be tamed or contained. And so She draws women on.

Until menopause, women have a monthly bleeding cycle which offers immeasurable opportunities for personal growth. Each month the Crone visits with women during

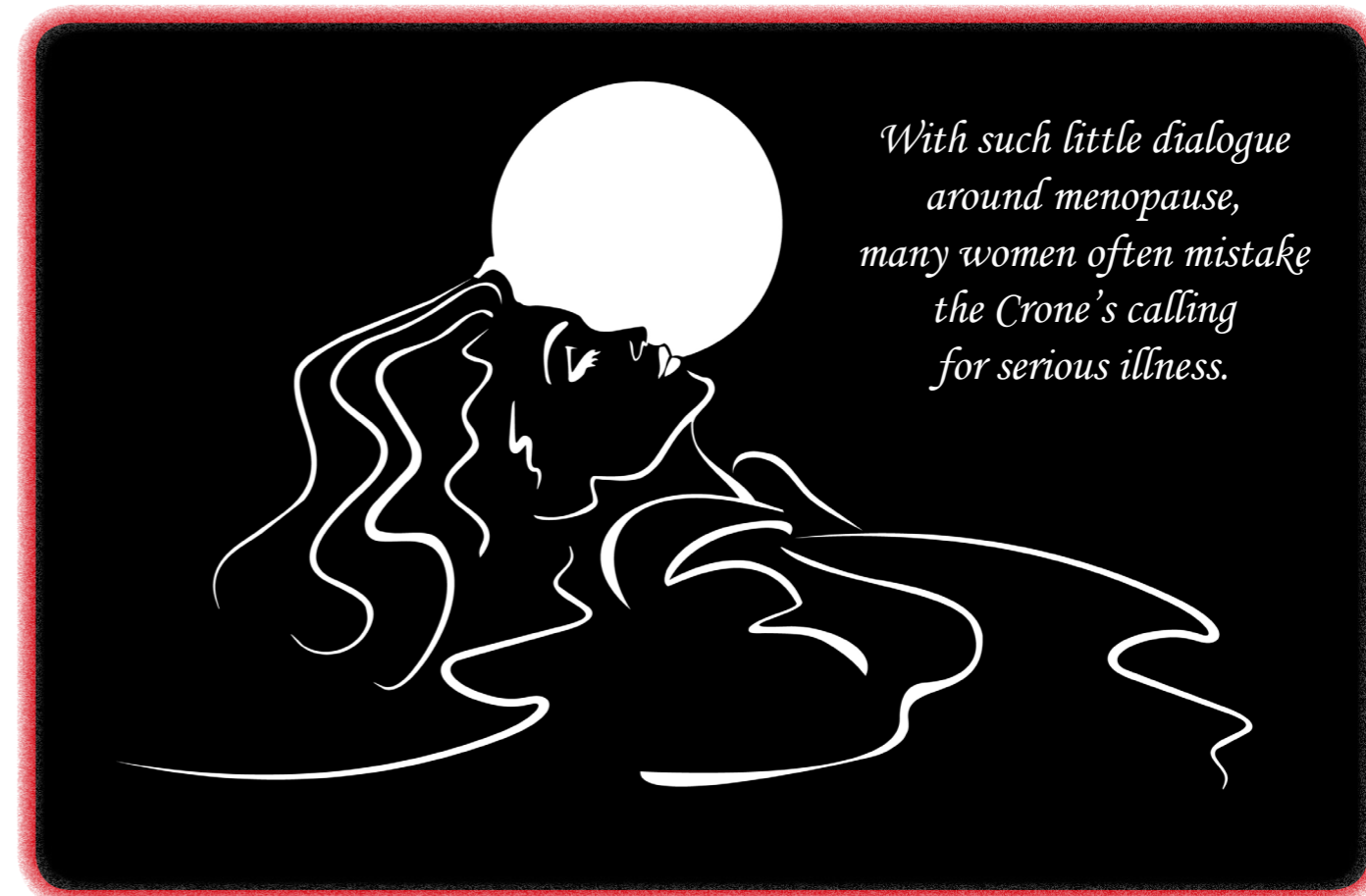
the final days and hours of the premenstrual phase of their cycle. Depending on how deeply a woman has listened to this womb-wisdom during the bleeding years, indicates how she will experience the pilgrimage of menopause. The culmination of all her years of blood cycles manifests as a woman's wisdom and ability to navigate herself during times of arduous journeying. Menopause is the journey for which she has been preparing. This preparation for pilgrimage is just as important as the pilgrimage itself.

Further preparation involves women experiencing perimenopause, the time when bleeding becomes irregular and early signs of hormonal changes become apparent. This can continue for years. If there is awareness of the upcoming pilgrimage then the transition to Wisdom Traveller can be smooth. It does not have to be traumatic or medicalised. Transition is a natural journey. Women's bodies are perfectly capable of taking this journey. It is during this time that a woman is pulled to overhaul her life. Often women question their relationships, life choices, patterns and beliefs. While there is no need for a 'slash and burn' approach, getting rid of dead wood helps women to travel lighter. Overhauling her nutritional requirements, exercise regime and relaxation techniques so as to sustain herself for the upcoming journey is a vital consideration for The Pilgrimage.

*It is a slow and purposeful  
walk to the Crone.  
With each step,  
deep and lasting shifts  
take place.*

When Moon blood flows no more and The Pilgrimage has commenced, a woman must give herself fully to the journey. She must be prepared to immerse herself completely in the experience and let go of past binding ties. Women experience a surge of energy to turn inwards as all which has remained in the shadows during the bleeding years now demands to be seen. The Pilgrimage to the Crone takes women on a journey which can be likened to years of amplified premenstrual tension without the release that came with blood flow. An unfaltering commitment to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual self-care is intrinsic to the journey. Awareness and self-care become the tools with which women can navigate the way.

When commencing The Pilgrimage, women feel a separation from everything they have known. This separation feels like entering a void filled with nothing and everything. It is a separation from external life. Women must develop the capacity to sit with the unknown. Sometimes women experience denial at this stage of the journey. There might be a frantic longing. A desperation to cling to the old. But the Crone's voice calls women into the void. There is no going back. Some women feel a huge sense of loss, betrayal and abandonment. This is the darkest hour, when women grieve the death of their old self. There are no more illusions when a woman is in the depths of



*With such little dialogue  
around menopause,  
many women often mistake  
the Crone's calling  
for serious illness.*

the void. It is now vital that she learns to say no to demands on her time and herself. Solid boundaries must be drawn. Saying no to others is saying yes to herself, and never is this more crucial than during the separation phase of a woman's pilgrimage. Although the shadowlands of separation can feel like forced isolation, all is as it is meant to be. Women must honour and stay present to this challenge.

The next destination is surrender. Surrender means to let go. It is here on the journey that women deepen their excavation of unresolved trauma and personal hurts, while all the time surrendering to the process. Once again, women need space. In darkness, the Crone beckons women to visit the shadow self, emptying out all that remains hidden there. During this part of The Pilgrimage, the bigger picture may remain hidden. What used to work no longer does. The distractions women have used to silence their inner voice no longer do so. There is sadness, grief and tiredness here.

Women must trust in the process, continually bringing awareness to their personal needs and self-care. This particular phase stretches

out for as long as is needed. It is through surrender, trust and letting go that acceptance is born.

When a woman brings light to all her shadows, she is no longer bothered by the constraints of perfection. She is accepting of all that she is. This triggers deep rejuvenation. At this moment of The Pilgrimage it becomes apparent that the Crone is calling women towards rebirth. Now is the time for a woman to be wholeheartedly selfish. To open herself up to receiving from herself and from others. Women must find a deep resting place at this part of the process so that complete renewal can take place.

It is a slow and purposeful walk to the Crone. With each step, deep and lasting shifts take place. By being present to these shifts, women undergo an awakening. There is a sense that all eternity has brought her to this moment. A glimpse of light is captured beyond the horizon. As a woman begins to come out of the depths of the void, a sense of excitement can overcome her. She may start running blindly towards the light. But steadily, steadily she must go. Slow, sure steps. The wisdom that women become during the

menopause pilgrimage is grounded by keeping a deep sense of presence throughout the journey back from the depths. The Crone will wait. She has been waiting for women since time immemorial. It is a woman's responsibility to herself to stay anchored and present during each step of this awakening phase of The Pilgrimage. For then comes clarity and direction.

If a woman has carried awareness, and cultivated self-care during each phase of The Pilgrimage, she now stands before an entire ocean of unlimited creative potential. She has a deep sense of knowing what has to be done. She is ready to express her soul. From this place she begins anew. In Chinese Medicine this time is known as the Second Spring, the time in a woman's life when she blooms into all her glorious power. The pilgrimage is over. There is a great sense of liberation. She has arrived at her destination. But this pilgrimage does not end at a shrine or temple. Rather, women embody the shrine. She is the temple. She is now Keeper of the Ancient Knowledge. She is the Crone. The Pilgrimage has been an initiation into wisdom. She has completed her blood lessons and crossed the void into the Wisdom Years. She has journeyed to her power and can choose how and when to use this power. In many ancient cultures, such women were considered 'the wisest of mortals' because of their tremendous life experience and because they now permanently retained their 'wise blood'.

And like the new beginning awaiting women in the Second Spring of their lives, a new cultural narrative is being born unto our world. Women are reclaiming sacred words and rituals. Everywhere there are artists painting images of wild women of all ages dancing freely in their beauty, power and strength. Poets are writing the Crone out of exile. As women awaken to their journey towards wholeness with the maiden, the mother and the Crone, women's voices are once more giving homage to the transitory nature of womanhood. Women can foresee the time when Wise Women Elder Circles will once again be at the heart of community life. As the fierce, dark, humorous, all-powerful

and sublimely outrageous Crone is welcomed back into the light, She permeates the collective with Her wisdom. During The Pilgrimage, it is said that a woman's womb energy moves up the chakra to reside as sacred wisdom in her crown chakrum. The Crown of the Crone. When we embrace the Crone and all Her ancient wisdom and power, we do so for our individual benefit and for that of the entire world.

© Copyright Teresa Maria Bilowus 2014  
All Rights Reserved.



The author wishes to acknowledge Alexandra Pope for her profound work in the field of Menstruality. This work has provided inspiration for this article. To learn more about Alexandra Pope visit: [www.womensquest.org](http://www.womensquest.org)

Artwork on page six is *Dark Moon Crone* by English artist and illustrator Michelle Maiden. Reproduced with permission. To see more of Michelle's stunning work, please visit: [www.elementalotherworld.com](http://www.elementalotherworld.com)

## Wise Blood

by Christin Lore Weber

You store up blood.  
It is no longer red.  
Your blood is black and thick; it is the density of life.  
It is wise blood.  
You make no more sons and daughters.  
You make wisdom of your womb.  
Go inside.  
Exist where beginnings and endings are one.  
Stare down your fear.  
Look it in the eyes until it falls on its knees.  
Eat your fear.  
Digest it.  
Take it into your blood.  
It makes you strong.  
Your body is the world.  
Everything fears death.  
Matter groans, waiting.  
You are what is most aware.  
You are my body.  
You are my beloved one.  
Feel the fear.  
Turn it to your blood.  
Pour it out.  
Black.  
Thick.  
Beautiful.  
The blood of an old woman.  
The blood of one who no longer fears death,  
Of one who stands on the edge of the world and sings.

Blood lessons  
are  
life lessons.  
They are the way  
in which  
the Crone  
ripens the fruits  
of women's lives.

Wise Blood by Christin Lore Weber from her book: *Circle of Mysteries*. Reprinted with permission. You can visit her at: <https://christinloreweber.blogspot.com>

by Veronika Sophia Robinson

*It is a privilege to grow old,  
something which is denied to many.  
Author unknown*

In an image-obsessed culture, the idea of a woman choosing to go grey or silver is portrayed as a sign that she has 'given up' on herself.

Youth and beauty seem mutually exclusive, and any sign of age is an indication of decay and of impending death.

At every turn we're trying to hold back the tide of age, but what we're really doing is holding back life itself.

Many people would say that Autumn is one of the most visually beautiful of all the seasons, and yet the Autumn of human life is met with much fear. What are we so scared of? Do we really believe that immortality is ours if we dye our silver hair to the colour of youth?

And why are greying men portrayed in a sexy way: silver fox? Why is it, once again, that there is one rule for women and

another for men? As a woman, reclaiming the right of our body to express itself naturally takes courage. The world is constantly feeding images to us that youth is life and longevity, and age is something to be hidden away. Ironically, for many people, myself included, the older we get the more dazzling and exhilarating life becomes. Surely the crown of silver is our

medal for having walked through the trials of fire, and coming out the other side?

The radiance of a woman shines through her eyes. Silver hair is not going to make her less attractive or feminine.

All the hair dye in the world will not give you a zest for life or a skip in your step, or inject you with happiness. These come from within, and are evidence of a life well lived and loved.

As we age, our skin tone changes, and the harsh truth is that dying our hair isn't the elixir of youth we've been led to believe. Our skin requires a softer look now, and



## Growing Bolder

### Dancing with the Silver Crown

*"You know, my hair is very upsetting to people, but it's upsetting on purpose. It is important to look old so that the young will not be afraid of dying. People don't like old women. We don't honor age in our society, and we certainly don't honour it in Hollywood."  
~ Tyne Daly, actress*

Nature has given us the perfect solution: silver hair.

Embracing each strand of silver hair is a celebration of growth and change, not something which needs to be feared. If we think plucking out a few stray silver hairs or religiously dyeing our hair is going to hold back the years, then we're wrong. Feeling alive and passionate about the life we walk means honouring ourself fully.

I discovered my first silver hairs round about my wedding day, aged 27. My mother had gone grey early, and dyed her hair for years. I'd already been dyeing mine for ten years, for fun, and the realisation that I had a lifetime ahead of me hit me hard, especially as my hair grows quickly and roots show through within a couple of weeks.

I was about 42 when I decided 'enough is enough'. I was no longer prepared to coat my head in dye (even the so-called natural ones) every few weeks. I felt too young to be going grey, and it was a bold step, but one which I felt was important. My life's work is about living with integrity and being authentic, and yet, staring me in the mirror every day was a person who was covering up! So, I cut my hair very short, and let the process begin. I had an image in mind: by the time I entered my crone years, I'd have long silver hair, and would look like a radiant Goddess. I'm not there yet, it's a work in progress, but I'm so pleased that I stuck with it, even on the truly bad-hair days. I'm grateful for myself, and also that I'm no longer contributing to the environmental

**My life's work is about living with integrity and being authentic, and yet, staring me in the mirror every day was a person who was covering up!**

impact caused by the hair-dye industry, nor am I victim of advertising.

It is worth noting that premature grey hair is often an indication of a nutrient deficiency, such as vitamin B12, iodine or copper. If your thyroid is low, you might find your hair feels rough or dry (or is, indeed, falling out). I recommend eating seaweeds each

day, or taking kelp. This will improve your hormone balance, and give you lustrous hair. It will take at least three months after your thyroid is functioning well before you notice the difference.

Many women, once they make the decision to go grey or silver, tend to wish it would happen all at once. If you have naturally dark hair, the process can seem agonisingly slow. Find a haircut/style that suits you, and is easy to look after, and before you know it you'll have embraced your silver crown.

Many people seem to forget that our skin is one of the main indicators of health and well-being. Eating a nutritious diet and drinking a couple of litres of water each day, as well as thinking happy thoughts, will do far more for your looks and attractiveness than a bottle of hair dye every month.

Reclaim your beauty with each strand of silver, and dance with that crown. You've earned it.

\*\*\*

Visit Pinterest, and be inspired: Search for silver hair. Photograph of Gun-Britt Zeller.

The radiance of a woman shines through her eyes. Silver hair is not going to make her less attractive or feminine.

# Gardening by the Moon

As a child, I was a faithful witness to my mother's green-thumb ways. People were in awe at the paradisiacal garden she created on the top of an old gravel pit. In its place she turned barrenness into Heaven on Earth: a true Garden of Eden. The secret to her magical fingers? Gardening by the Moon. She practised faithfully, and was richly rewarded with an abundant and prolific garden. There are variations on lunar gardening, such as following the Rudolph Steiner principles. However, I have found that simply following the Moon's journey through the signs is best.

The Moon transits through all twelve zodiac signs each month, traversing through four elements. It is these elements that form the foundation of lunar gardening. As we come to understand the energy of each element, our mind and heart start to naturally follow the Moon's rhythm and vibration. When the Moon is in a particular element, this is the time to sow seeds, hoe the ground, weed, or harvest in relation to that sign/elemental energy. So, if the Moon is in fire sign, for example, I work with the plants associated with that energy.

### Fire Signs

*Aries, Leo, Sagittarius*

### Earth Signs

*Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn*

### Air Signs

*Gemini, Libra, Aquarius*

### Water Signs

*Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces*

If you miss working with one element, don't worry, the Moon will travel through that again in nine days.

The fire element represents fruit, and what grows from the plant: this can literally be a fruit, or a vegetable we pluck, such as a bean or pumpkin.

Earth represents roots, and those items we harvest from the ground, such as potatoes, beetroot, carrot, parsnip, valerian or dandelion root.

The air Moon is the time to work with flowers, whether they are those we grow for beauty and adornment, or those we've planted for harvest.

The water Moon is for anything to do with leaves, if that is the primary part of the plant, herb or tree that you wish to nourish or harvest.



**Signs for this Moon cycle**  
(all times in Greenwich Mean Time)

### June 2014

28th Moon in Cancer  
29th Cancer, ingresses into Leo 9.42am  
30th Leo

### July 2014

1st Leo, ingresses Virgo 22.23  
2nd Virgo  
3rd Virgo  
4th Virgo, ingresses into Libra 10.42 am  
5th Libra  
6th Libra, ingresses into Scorpio 20.33  
7th Scorpio  
8th Scorpio  
9th Scorpio, ingresses into Sagittarius 2.24am  
10th Sagittarius  
11th Sagittarius, ingresses into Capricorn 4.24am  
12th Capricorn  
13th Capricorn, ingresses into Aquarius 4.06am  
14th Aquarius  
15th Aquarius, ingresses into Pisces 3.40am  
16th Pisces  
17th Pisces, ingresses into Aries 5.06am  
18th Aries  
19th Aries, ingresses into Taurus 9.42am  
20th Taurus  
21st Taurus, ingresses into Gemini 17.35  
22nd Gemini  
23rd Gemini  
24th Gemini, ingresses into Cancer 3.59am  
25th Cancer  
26th Cancer, ingresses into Leo 15.54

# Earth Medicine

### Arnica

The arnica balm is ideal for use on bruises.

### Calendula

Use calendula where the skin has been broken.

### Chickweed

Relieves sunburn, itches, insect bites, eczema, and can draw out splinters and boils.

### Cloves

For nausea, insect bites, and toothache.

### Echinacea

Supports the immune system, and prevents colds and flu.

### Garlic

Boosts the immune system, reduces cholesterol, improves digestion and prevents colds.

### Lavender

Insect bites, sunburn, insomnia, headaches caused from stress.

### Sage

Encourages menstrual flow, suppresses perspiration, and lowers blood-sugar levels.

### Starflower

Skin rashes, chicken pox, flow of breast milk.

### Tea Tree

Antiviral, antifungal. Clears vaginal and nipple thrush.

### Thyme

Eases chest infections and coughs.

### Valerian

Improves mood and brings deep sleep.





# The Star Thrower

## Making a Difference

We must each find our starfish.  
And if we throw our stars wisely and well,  
I have no question  
that the 21st Century is going to be a  
wonderful time.



*Anna James first spotted the light of the silvery Moon as a babe in arms, through the bedroom window. It was one of the first words she spoke, and has held a lifelong fascination since, albeit these days she has extended her cosmic circle to embrace the planets. Alongside astrology, Anna loves beaches, black labradors, bluebells, the sight of sunshine on water, eating outdoors next to an open fire, melted Camembert ....and most of all, great big bear hugs.*



Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He was a very special person because he combined the best of two cultures. He was a scientist and a poet. And from these two perspectives he wrote insightfully and beautifully about the world and our role in it.

He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work. One day as he did this, he looked down the beach, and saw a human figure moving like a dancer.

He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So he began to walk faster to catch up. As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man, and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead, he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean.

As the wise man got closer, he called out "What are you doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I guess I should have asked, 'Why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?'"

"The Sun is up, and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in, they'll die."

"But, young man, don't you realise that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You can't possibly make a difference!"

The young man listened politely, then bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves.

"It made a difference for that one."

His response upset the wise man. He was upset and didn't know how to reply. So, instead, he turned away and walked back to his cottage to begin his writing.

All day long as he wrote, the image of that young man haunted him. He tried to ignore it, but the vision persisted. Finally, late that night he realised that he, the scientist, and he the poet, had missed the essential nature of the young man's actions. He realised that what the young man was doing was choosing not to be an observer in the Universe and watch it pass by, but was choosing to be an actor in the Universe and make a difference.

When morning came, he awoke knowing he had to do something. So he got up, dressed, went to the beach and found the young man. And, together, they spent the rest of the morning throwing starfish into the ocean.

What that young man's actions represent is something that is special in each and every one of us. We have all been gifted with the ability to make a difference. And if we can, like the young man, become aware of our gift, we gain the power to shape the future. That is your challenge. That is my challenge. We must each find our starfish. And if we throw our stars wisely and well, I have no question that the 21st Century is going to be a wonderful time.

Remember:

*Vision without action is merely a dream  
Action without vision just passes the time  
Vision with action can change the world!*

by Anna James

Many moons ago, I attended a training event which presented a new theory or model of learning, or at least it was new to me. The material, and the way it was presented, tapped into the fact each of us receives, processes and uses information in very different ways. The tempo of the course was upbeat, the facilitators inspirational, and I was provided with much food for thought about how to use this new-found knowledge in my role as a trainer, at the time.

Interestingly, however, the impact of the event took on a different mantle some two weeks later when the Star Thrower story arrived as a follow-up in the post. I remember opening the envelope, reading the contents, and feeling droplets of salt water roll gently down my cheeks. This story literally plucked at my heart strings.

It speaks to me of meaning, and very much reiterates the beautiful Mother Teresa quote: *Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.* When I find myself feeling overwhelmed, lost, confused or 'at sea', I try to reflect on what small things I can do for myself or others that will make a difference and calm the choppy waters, however small the actions may seem.

With the New Moon in the zodiacal sign of Cancer, I am drawn to themes of the home, nurture and emotional security. I'm a home-loving woman who needs a safe haven like a tortoise needs its shell. I have no desire for grandness, but warmly welcome items gifted with love. Each year at this time I get agitated; it is time to organise the renewal of my household insurance. Internet searches are undertaken, calls follow until the best 'deal' is struck to protect my possessions against violation.

What a distressing thought to most of us, I suspect. In a recent conversation with a broker, I found myself pondering on the fiscal value of the things I 'own', while embracing the thought that it is not the monetary value of my possessions which adds value to my life, but the emotional currency they hold. I

## With the new Moon in the zodiacal sign of Cancer, I am drawn to themes of the home, nurture and emotional security.

can buy a new TV set but could never replace the drawer full of old greeting cards, or more specifically, the meaning behind those cards that sit in the cabinet below the set. Each one, selected by one person for one occasion, with a thought, a gesture, a kind word carefully chosen, that has made a difference to my life.

The most recently welcomed addition to my home is a gift from someone I love dearly, illustrated here (next to the biography) as a perfect launch to this column. It is a handmade wooden frame, shaped to honour the natural curve of the wood, and safely hold some treasure. What greater metaphor is there I wonder to represent what home means for me. And then I learn it is made of holly, adding yet a further layer of meaning.

As I research the Bach flower remedies, I read: "Holly holds a central position among the remedies because it embodies love - the highest energy quality through which we all live, and which is our greatest healing power."

This new gift to me and my home is warmly embraced, and is welcome to stay for many moons to come. Each time I look at it, I am aware of its original source, the gentle and talented hands which moulded it into its current form, and the story which it holds for me.

I am reminded of the responsibility I hold to throw my starfish "wisely and well", and equally I'm prompted to take some action and not just consider doing so .

I wonder where and how you are throwing the starfish in your life to make a difference .

## Six Ways to Start the Day in a Good Mood



Illustration by Sara Simon  
from The Mystic Cookfire  
www.starflowerpress.com

### Smile at yourself in the mirror

Before you do anything else, stand in front of your mirror and smile. Tell yourself it's a great day! Go on, give yourself a wink.

### Walk barefoot on the grass

Whenever possible, start your day walking barefoot on the grass. The dew will help conduct the Earth's natural radiation into your body. This is a deeply beneficial habit to get into.

### Cup of tea

Stew a pot of your favourite herb or fruit tea. Tea rituals are known to bring relaxation into one's life. Don't drink on the run, though. Take time to sit and sip.

### Watch the sunrise

Come on, sleepyhead. Watch the Sun as he peeps his yellow face over the horizon. You will never be able to see this particular sunrise again. Don't miss it!

### Light a candle

Take five minutes to sit quietly. Light a beeswax candle, and let your attention rest on the flame. It's a simple but effective practice, and will bring calm to your morning.

### Drink two large glasses of water

After a long night of sleep, healing and detoxification, your body is ready for liquid nourishment. Hydration is optimally achieved through two large glasses of water first thing, and followed by several more throughout the day. This will wake you up, and bring your sluggish organs to life.



# Calendula Balm

by *Claire Thompson*

*Claire began her journey with plants and the land's Spirits in early childhood, and continues to be enchanted by the magic of Nature. She lives in a remote part of north-west Ireland, with her two home-educated children, where they tread lightly, tend to vegetables, herbs and animals, and are committed to deep ecology. Claire is often to be found foraging for wild food and healing herbs, which are then transformed into healing balms and tinctures for the community. She blogs at [claireyfaerie.blogspot.ie](http://claireyfaerie.blogspot.ie)*

The strikingly beautiful orange and yellow heads of *Calendula officinalis* open with the Sun's rays and close again at daylight's end. This Sun herb is ruled by the fiery spirit of Leo, giving us the message that the plant strengthens and warms the heart, encouraging compassion.

The extended flowering season, with the first flowers appearing around April, and lasting until first frost, also shows us that the plant supports endurance. The calendula plant is very easy to grow, and is useful in the garden: repelling pests and improving soil. It is a much-loved companion plant, and the petals can be snipped and added to salads.

There are many other uses for the calendula flower too, and it has a long history as a herbal medicinal plant. It is not just a pretty face! The petals can be added to a bath to promote relaxation, or to a dream pillow to foster peaceful sleep, healing, and to soothe the nerves. Calendula tea is a useful source of beta carotene, boosting the immune system. This tea also detoxifies the liver, and helps heal stomach ulcers.

Making the tea is very simple. Pop a few calendula blossoms into a mug, cover with boiling water, and allow to steep for 15-20

minutes. Strain the flowers and add raw organic honey to taste.

However, the primary use for this sunny herb is as a topical application to wounds, scrapes and sores. It boosts the healing rate, and helps prevent infections - it being antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic. Calendula also stimulates collagen production, which means that scarring is reduced. It is excellent for eczema, dermatitis and psoriasis, and gentle enough for use on babies, children and sensitive skin. Every home would benefit from a pot of Calendula salve or a jar of the golden oil. Making your own healing ointment is straightforward, and you begin by making an oil infusion.

\* Collect the fresh flower heads on a sunny day, preferably around the date of the Full Moon, when the medicinal strength of the plant is pulled up into the flowers and leaves. Shake the flowers gently to remove any insects that may be hidden, and leave to wilt for a few hours or overnight, to reduce the water content.

\* Pack the blooms into a sterile glass jar, and cover with organic sunflower or sweet almond oil. Make sure all the plant material is completely covered with oil. This is important, otherwise the oil will spoil.

\* Seal the jar, and leave on a sunny windowsill (under a cloth to protect the colour) for a couple of weeks, shaking the jar every day and checking the oil level to ensure all the plant material stays covered. You may need to top up with more oil.

\* After a couple of weeks, around the Dark Moon, strain the oil into another sterile jar using a muslin-lined sieve or a coffee filter. The oil can be used like this or you can turn it into a balm. It is vital to label the bottle and date it. It is easy to skip this step and convince yourself that you will remember the details. This is quite unlikely. Label to be sure!

*To make the balm:*

\* Pour 300ml calendula oil into a bain marie  
\* Add seven teaspoons of organic beeswax pastilles, and heat slowly until the beeswax has melted.

Pour the oil into clean amber jars. Leave the top off while it cools and hardens, then seal and label.

This makes a soft balm, which I prefer for using on children. A hurting child does not need anyone rubbing a hard wax onto a graze. If preferred, extra beeswax can be added for a more solid salve. You can test the consistency by placing some of the mixture on a teaspoon, and placing in a freezer for five minutes. You can add other ingredients to your mix, such as shea butter and/or essential oils. I add about 15 drops of myrrh essential oil, but lavender would be an excellent choice, too.

It is wonderfully rewarding to capture the essence of this bright sunshine herb in a bottle and watch its nourishing qualities release in use.

*This Sun herb is ruled  
by the fiery spirit of Leo,  
giving us the message that  
the plant strengthens  
and warms the heart,  
encouraging compassion.*

# Floatation Therapy:

# My Return to the Womb



*I am  
my own healer.*

by Veronika Sophia Robinson

It seems appropriate to start our first article in the *Zen Zone* with a healing modality symbolic of the archetype of Cancer: mother's nurturing. In the oceanic waters of the womb we begin our Earthly experience. For many people, the amniotic life lasts around ten moons. Once we leave this watery retreat for life on Mother Earth, we are bound down by gravity.

Although I'd heard of floatation therapy years ago, I really didn't know what it involved. Having now experienced it for myself a number of times, I can only say I wish I'd

come across it sooner. But life brings us the gifts when we need them most, and I'm grateful for the changes which floatation therapy is bringing to my life.

Just the other day I was chatting with a man at our local gym about the floatation tank and how it would be good for his aches and pains. His reply was that he hasn't been still for more than two minutes since he was nine months old, and the thought of being in a tank for an hour seemed like torture. His thoughts on this really spoke to me: so many people desperately avoid quiet and stillness. We live in a busy, 24/7 culture in which humans are taught to relate to the external world

rather than the rich terrain of inner life. Is the internal landscape such a frightful place? What might we find there? What monsters lurk in the deep subconscious?

Astrologically, Cancer symbolises the deep artesian basin (underground lake) of our psyche, a place where our preverbal experiences are rarely made conscious. The nurturing of early life—how we were held and loved by mother—provides the foundation for who we become. It's not that we can't change who we are, but our drivers often remain unseen. The very people who fear the sense of stillness and calm a floatation session can bring are probably the ones who would benefit the most.

What can floatation therapy bring us? For me, one of the greatest benefits is psychological. It allows me to heal without relying on (or being disappointed by) a therapist. *I am my own healer.*

The environment created by the restricted stimulus of floatation therapy means that the mind is not distracted by sound, sight, gravity or touch. Due to the amount of Epsom salts, the water allows you to float on the surface. The feeling of weightlessness, alone, is worth the time you spend in there. The

water temperature is 35.5°C, and because the room is warm, too, your brain doesn't differentiate between water and air. The buoyancy means that the lack of perceivable gravity encourages your body to fully relax. The benefit of this on *every single muscle* in the body can last days or weeks.

A floatation tank is designed to block out all distractions, and has a lid. Given my claustrophobic nature, I do not have the lid down. This is important for people to realise, as the fear of being 'trapped' or unable to breathe is clearly not a relaxing one. The room is dark, and I can use a black-out eye mask if I choose, so there is no need for the lid to be down.

Some people choose to use ear plugs. I haven't found this necessary. When the lights are turned off, the neocortex (frontal brain) stops interfering, and we start to access the other parts of our brain. This is when deep relaxation begins.

During my first session, I felt like a naughty girl swishing about and rotating my hips. I've had lower back/sacral pain for years, and it just felt so delightful to move around with ease, mermaid style. So play, I did. By the second and third sessions, I was able to just

This change in dynamic means one can find themselves becoming more creative, and naturally and easily solving problems.

When we receive magnesium through the skin, we absorb it eight times more efficiently than through digestion.



go straight into relaxation mode, and leave my hip dance till near the end of my hour-long float session.

The science of floatation therapy is fascinating. The recorded benefits are both physical and mental, but I have no doubt there are spiritual benefits, too. Primarily, floating brings the obvious: relaxation and calm. It is known to eliminate jet lag and fatigue, as well as alleviate stress, improve sleep, and rejuvenate. As someone who is healing adrenal fatigue, I was shocked by the huge impact the first floatation session had on my body. I felt as if I'd had more energy than in the previous ten years.

Research has shown that floatation sessions not only help to diminish fear, anxiety, and depression, they also help motivate people; as well as allowing those with addictions and unhealthy habits a way to find themselves naturally eliminating them without any conscious work on their part.

The shift in brain waves to low-frequency alpha, and for some people theta and delta, means the two hemispheres of the brain are able to be synchronised. This change in dynamic means one can find themselves becoming more creative, and naturally and easily solving problems. The mind becomes alert and clear. Visualisation, during and after the float, is heightened. Those who practise meditation find their experience deepening. Others notice an acceleration of all six senses, and find lovemaking to be enhanced. Anyone engaging in learning, self-hypnosis, or other types of hypnotherapy, is benefited by floatation.

My primary fascination with floatation is to do with healing adrenal fatigue. For me, it feels like the ideal healing model. Floating not only alters the set-point to help us lower adrenal activation, but also increases our tolerance of stress. It significantly decreases blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen consumption, blood lactate and muscular tension.

Those who have suffered sports injuries are well supported by the way the floatation relieves pain and speeds the healing process. Other physical benefits include: relief from migraines, injuries, arthritis; improvement of immune system functioning; increased distribution of nutrients and oxygen around the body; reduction in pulse, heart rate, blood pressure. Women who experience PMS (PMT), and children with autism, have also been shown to benefit from floating.

Meditators spend much time achieving the low-brain frequency that floatation can bring in just a few minutes.

Many people are aware that putting Epsom salts in their bath is a wonderful way to rid one's self of aches and pains. The concentration of salts in a float tank is significantly greater, hence the ability to float as if one were on the Dead Sea. The salts allow the lymph system to drain, as well as allowing the body to absorb magnesium and sulphates. Most of the population is deficient in magnesium, and this results in many symptoms. Human cells require a lot of magnesium to function efficiently. When we receive magnesium through the skin, we absorb it eight times more efficiently than through digestion. By floating in the tank, we easily absorb this vital nutrient which is needed to regulate more than 325 enzymes. Not only does it help us to eliminate toxins, but supports electrical function in the body, and muscle control. Much of today's standard diet (sugar, caffeine, and so on) strips magnesium from our body.

If you're ready to find a way to relieve yourself from the stressors of modern life, I can't recommend floatation therapy highly enough. The rich world of inner life is a beautiful place for those who dare to face their inner dragons.

*Photograph of floatation tank, courtesy of Calico. A special thanks to Christine Jackson at Calico Health and Wellbeing Centre for use of the floatation tank and inspiring me to try this wonderful healing modality.*  
<http://www.calicohealthandwellbeingcentre.co.uk/>



## Spinach and Nutmeg Quinoa Bake

Expect to see a lot of quinoa recipes in *Starflower Living*. It's so versatile, and is a wonderful source of protein. Suitable for savoury and sweet dishes, it's quick to prepare and ideal for those on gluten-free and low-carb diets.

### Ingredients

4 cups cooked quinoa, or two cups uncooked  
 2 tablespoons vegetable bouillon powder (to put in cooking water)  
 olive oil, sunflower or coconut oil  
 4 eggs ( or 4 teaspoons egg replacer, plus liquid)  
 2 onions (one red, if desired)  
 5 cloves garlic  
 1 teaspoon nutmeg  
 pinch cayenne pepper  
 500g baby-spinach leaves,  
 600 ml organic sour cream or Tofutti sour cream or coconut cream  
 2 teaspoons organic lemon zest  
 ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
 1 grated carrot  
 1 teaspoon turmeric

Cook quinoa in water and bouillon, until the 'tail' comes out of the seed.

Preheat oven to 175C. Oil a 20x20cm baking dish or line with baking paper.

Whisk eggs (or egg replacer and water) and leave to sit. Sauté chopped onions and garlic in a little oil for several minutes, until clear.

Add nutmeg and cayenne, then spinach, and sauté for a few minutes. Combine with the eggs. Mix well, then add quinoa, carrot, lemon zest, pepper, turmeric and cream. When well mixed, pour into the baking dish. Bake for one hour or until the edges are brown. After cooking, leave to set for about five to ten minutes. Can be served hot or cold. Perfect for lunch boxes.

Serves six as a main dish. Serve with steamed greens or salad.

## Mango and Lime Cheesecake



### Crust

200g raw almonds  
 half cup medjool dates  
 quarter cup desiccated coconut  
 2 teaspoons vanilla essence  
 pinch sea salt

### Filling

2 ripe mangoes  
 half a lime (juice and zest)  
 half cup broken cashew nuts (soak overnight)  
 3 tablespoons coconut oil  
 5 tablespoons maple syrup  
 250ml coconut cream  
 1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves  
 ½ teaspoon vanilla essence

Whizz all the crust ingredients in a food processor until it forms into crumbs, then divide between four mini-tart pans. Use damp fingers, and press down until it resembles a crust. Leave to one side while you make the filling.

Process the mango, cashews (drained), lime juice and zest, coconut oil and cream, mint, vanilla and maple syrup until creamy.

Pour into crust cases, and freeze for at least two hours. Remove from the freezer and leave for only a few minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh mint leaves or lime slices.



Veronika Robinson is the author of the popular vegetarian recipe book *The Mystic Cookfire*, published by Starflower Press. She is currently writing two more recipe books: *The Mother's Kitchen* and *Cooking by Degrees* (easy and budget-friendly recipes for university students).



**By Veronika Sophia Robinson**

*Veronika is the author of more than 14 non-fiction books, as well as a novelist, children's author and journalist. She was editor of The Mother magazine for twelve years. Veronika lives in rural Cumbria, and loves thunderstorms, cooking, flowers, hot sunshine, walking through the woods, lovemaking, laughing out loud, mangos and marinated artichokes. [www.veronikarobinson.com](http://www.veronikarobinson.com)*

Ssssh. Listen. Can you hear that? All around us, at any given moment, Nature is alive with the thrilling sounds of procreation. Sex is fundamental to existence, and yet humans, apparently the most 'intelligent' species, have maligned it in ways that make the term sacred sexuality seem like an oxymoron.

We are more than just our physical bodies, and sex isn't only for reproduction. Reclaiming the sanctity of our sexuality is a vital step on the road of living a conscious life, in much the same way as recognising that money isn't just 'filthy, dirty lucre' but an energetic force field capable of bringing each of us much growth and change. How we use it is personal, and a reflection of our belief system and previous experiences.

Regardless of the past, we can choose a new way to experience two of our society's greatest taboos: money and sex.

What happens when we embrace our sexuality in ways that go beyond intercourse being just a quick release of physical energy? How do we use the physical vehicle to transcend our ego? Let's be honest here, sex can be a whole lot of fun, exciting, electric and wonderful. It can also be terrifying and degrading, if you're in the wrong hands and it's against your will. How can one basic act span such a vast continuum? Quite simply, it's because humans are complex creatures at different stages of evolution, health and awareness.

First and foremost, the way we were handled and nurtured as infants plays a huge role in shaping how we perceive our bodies and emerging sexuality. Were we picked up with hands of love and tenderness, and cooed and cuddled? Perhaps our parent was emotionally distant or offended when changing our dirty nappy? Maybe the foreskin of our penis was cut without our permission. Were we welcomed to the nurturing soft and malleable breast or 'pacified' with an inanimate hard bottle or dummy?

All these preverbal experiences profoundly influence us long before we develop a conscious awareness of sexuality. They let us know whether our body is something to love or fear.

Our use of language is a good indicator of the many ways in which we view sex: making love, having a 'naughty', shagging, screwing, intercourse, and so on, are words used to describe this most fundamental of biological acts. But where and when does biology become something else? Something more?

If there's one topic that comes up a lot in my discussion with friends it is around the relevance of monogamy. Countless times I've heard the question: do you think it's natural? It appears to be perfectly natural for swans, but as for humans, I can't answer that. What I do know is that it's easy to generalise and assume most men would say 'no, it's not natural', and women, the keepers of hearth and home, would say 'yes, it is'. You might be surprised how many women don't believe it's natural. So what keeps these women with one man? Cultural expectations, mostly.

When raising a family, it certainly seems like a 'sensible' option. Stability is key for happy

and healthy families. How we translate such stability so that couples can still feel sexually attracted and turned on by their partner after years of nappies and teething is another matter altogether.

When answering the question of is it natural or right to be monogamous, I can only speak for myself. I made a decision to be sexually faithful to my husband, and he made the same with me. It's a choice, not an obligation. We've both been in relationships where this wasn't always the case. We know it brings hurt and pain. I still cringe when I remember the look on one man's face when he realised I'd been having sex with someone else. It truly is something I wish I could erase from my memory banks. I caused him to feel hurt, and that was never my intention. My only thought at the time was about myself. And in truth, that is what infidelity is: very rarely has it to do with the person we're 'cheating' on, but our own needs and desires. I have also been on the other side of the coin...and been the one left critically wounded.

Maybe it's my age, or maybe I'm just mellowing, or perhaps I'm becoming more mature, but I see monogamy as a spiritual vision quest. I have never felt more sexually



liberated, at ease, and aroused than in this marriage, where I feel safe, loved, honoured and protected. This was never my experience in all the years of being sexually active before I met my husband. Perhaps key to this quest of honouring one's self through sexual harmony with one lover, is that the energetic connection becomes stronger each time you make love. There is a deep knowingness that comes with complete surrender.

In the same way that it is impossible to achieve orgasm without letting go and allowing yourself to 'tip over the edge', so too is there that level of going to the other side when you're committed sexually. To be clear, I'm

I have never felt more sexually liberated, at ease, and aroused than in this marriage, where I feel safe, loved, honoured and protected.

not talking about staying in relationships that are not healthy or where love has died or never existed. I am referring to *relationships of the heart*: a place where you can be open and honest and give of yourself.

Does being monogamous mean you only have eyes for one person? I wouldn't be a red-blooded female if I didn't notice when an attractive man walked by or smiled at me, but there's a world of difference between window shopping and buying an outfit! I hope if a man was ever that irresistibly attracted to me, and vice versa, that I'd remember my beloved's face and walk away from the situation. Not because I'm a "good girl" or confined by marriage and outdated matrimonial rules, but because I value what I've spent the best part of twenty years creating and nurturing: *sacred love*.

As a young woman in my early twenties, I was so ecstatic when the 'love of my teenage life'

finally ended up going out with me. It had only taken us six years to get to this point! Kevin was a butcher, and I, a vegetarian. Six months of dating led to me having six months of dreams about abattoirs. Every single night my dreams were haunted by hanging carcasses. The relationship couldn't continue.

Not everyone will be so sensitive to their lover's every thought or feeling, but this is an example of how we take on the energetics of the person we make love with. When a man holds a woman in his arms and enters her, he leaves her with more than his sperm. He is entrancing her and leaving his vital self within the core of her femininity. And she gives of

herself, too. Every time she parts her legs and reveals her heart to him, she is vulnerable and open. This is her sacred gift to him. How he enters her, the way he touches her physically, emotionally and spiritually while he's inside, and how he surrenders to her, will all leave an imprint.

Our sexuality is located in the base (red) chakrum, and when we are functioning healthily this is activated and nourished. This then flows on to the other chakra,

opening and enlivening our whole being.

The sexual energy which courses through our veins is a vibrant creative fire. The stronger our life force, the more vital and alive we become. Our sexuality is not separate from the rest of our being. We do not need to be in a relationship or sexually involved with another human being in order to allow our libidinous juices to flow. Every time we create something, we are offering the world a part of ourselves.

Making love is more than just touching skin and igniting a few nerve endings. If it were that simple, we could have sex with just anyone and enjoy it. No, making love is something more, something deeper: it is a fusion of energies and deep respect. It is what separates us from the animals. If sacred sexuality is sounding a bit too serious for you, consider that it is: fun, delightful, whimsical,

pleasurable, light-hearted and succulently erotic.

Women, how well do you know your sexual playground? Yoni, vagina, labia, lips, lady-garden, whistle, bits...whatever you choose to call it, how well do you know this part of your anatomy? This is your pleasure centre, and fundamental to your health. Become best buddies, and watch your life change.

You spend time each day studying your face in the mirror, but why not your yoni? This is the portal to your creative fire, so why cringe at the thought? When was the last time you had a good look down there? Don't squirm at the idea. Afterall, men touch and look at their penis several times a day.

In my most recent book, *Cycle to the Moon*, there is a blank page for putting yoni art. This can be done by taking a print using menstrual blood or by using earth pants. Reclaiming this sacred part of our body is vital if we expect to be whole and happy. To do otherwise, is to be repressed. Our sexual chakrum (chakra is plural for chakrum) is the home of our creative fire, and is where our inspiration takes root. Artistic blockages stem from inefficient use of this chakrum.

Our world is filled with judgements about how we should be as sexual beings. Expose your breasts to feed your young child, and you're considered obscene and told to feed in the toilet. Pose on page three of a British tabloid newspaper, and you'll earn a lot of money. Why is it okay to wear a mini-skirt in your twenties, but not in your sixties? When and how do we turn on and turn off our sexual drive? All of these messages reverberate within the cultural soup. Daily we are bombarded by conflicting messages about sex, sexuality and relationships. Many of our choices aren't in fact choices, but expectations placed upon us by culture or family.

Our sexual chakrum is our creative power centre. If we don't use it, we lose it. The more aligned we are to creativity, the more our sexual energy can flow, and vice versa. One of the biggest killers of sexual bliss is thinking. When we undress and share our





When the container of their loving relationship envelops the couple, they are able to go to deeper and deeper levels of trust. It is here, in the dissolution of the ego, that their love can touch the face of the Divine.

body with another, the neocortex (front brain) needs to be booted out of the bedroom. There's a reason for turning off the lights. It's not so we can hide our flabby belly, ladies and gents, but so that the frontal lobe of the new brain goes to sleep and our reptilian and limbic brain are activated. This is a time for instinct, feelings and opening the heart. As mammals, we need privacy and safety to unleash our lovemaking hormones and feel safe.

If you're in a sexual relationship and seek to transform it into a more sacred experience, it begins not with the physical body, but with the heart centre. It is about being honest and sharing your deepest fears around sexuality and lovemaking. This intimacy (in to *me* see) sets the stage for opening up your body. The ego has to be removed as the first step to surrendering. Lovemaking isn't just something that happens between the sheets at the end of the day. It happens long before that: when we look lovingly into each other's eyes, touch our lover's hand or shoulder, and laugh gently together. These moments of non-sexual intimacy create bonding. When this happens each and every day, the walls of defensiveness crumble away. This is where the magic happens: long before we jump into bed.

Feeling free to be who we are without fear of judgment and criticism, in any given moment, is vital to being our true self at any time, but especially when in a sexual relationship. Choosing to be in a sacred sexual relationship is a quest for wholeness which offers both

partners the opportunity to be authentic. Monogamy, to work beautifully, needs to be a whole-hearted choice, not a prison sentence and not a religious or cultural expectation. When the container of their loving relationship envelops the couple, they are able to go to deeper and deeper levels of trust. It is here, in the dissolution of the ego, that their love can touch the face of the Divine.

In anthropological terms, monogamy is pretty recent in human history. Many people feel drawn to multiple relationships, and if that works for them and all of those involved, then why not?

One of the big fears many people have around monogamy lies in the idea of maintaining sexual attraction and desire. And while it is true that this uses a different part of the brain than that required for building the bonds needed to create a family home, there is no reason for desire to diminish with the passing years. In essence, it is a choice. Being turned on by someone begins in the mind. It isn't about the size of jeans they wear, or the curve of their breasts or the way they walk.



Sexuality is a form of play. It is for pleasure and fun. If you're not experiencing this, then it's time to go back to the drawing board and discover what is getting in the way.

Sex can become more enjoyable with age, possibly due to having more experience of it but often because we're more comfortable with who we are as a person.

There are women, like myself, for whom multiple orgasm is as natural as breathing; and there are countless women who have never experienced a sexual climax. When a woman says to me 'how will I know if I've had an orgasm?', I tell her: because you won't have to ask!

In relationships where there are mismatched libidos, for example, one person needs sex every day, and the other is happy to make love once a year, it is highly recommended that you're tested for nutritional deficiencies such as zinc, magnesium and iron. While we all have different needs, and ways of being aroused, a desire for sex is a natural part of being a healthy human being. Other things that might be inhibiting your drive include unconscious memories of childhood sexual abuse, or perhaps you're in a relationship that doesn't fill your heart with joy.

In any long-term relationship, it is natural to have ebbs and flows to the number of times you have sex, such as when one person is ill or fatigued. In healthy humans, however, the desire to connect and express that love sexually is natural.

One of the great taboos around sexuality lies in the realm of self-pleasuring. The word masturbation still brings up guilt, fear and shame for many people, of both sexes. Why? How did we ever get to

the point where the cultural message is: you are not allowed to love, enjoy and appreciate the miracle of your body.

I have long believed that if we were not designed to self-pleasure, then we wouldn't have been given arms and fingers. It would enhance all sexual relationships if each partner took responsibility for learning what they enjoyed and didn't enjoy, so that when they connected it was in a spirit of knowingness.

Humans all have in common that they seek out pleasure. When we truly engage in something pleasurable, such as eating good food, it tends to satiate many of our senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell. When this happens, the limbic part of our brain is ignited. For many people, sex has become clinical, and some of the senses are not explored or pleased. Allow yourself to enjoy the sensation of how your lover smells, and the scent of when you're together. What do you each taste like?

The touch of an erect nipple has a different sensation than that of a moist clitoris or that of a man's underarm hair. His warming body reminds her of the scent of cumin, that earthy spice she loves to cook with in the kitchen.

The sight of her as she lazily closes her eyes as she climaxes, or the way her moaning drops an octave as she navigates the peak of ecstasy, are all the languages of pleasurable lovemaking. They are food for the soul. Delight in each moment, and let it nourish your whole being. The sacred is found in the everyday. We just need the right lens in which to appreciate the view.

Preserving a sexually sacred relationship is founded on being conscious of it regardless of whatever else consumes your energy in the course of a day. To open your body and soul to sacred sexuality is to allow yourself to be a vessel for creative fire.

# Feminism

## and the knight in shining armour



Does the Knight in Shining Armour archetype simply amplify male domination, or does it show that men care for women?

by Eliza Serena Robinson

*Eliza is the author of Consequence and Amend; Young Adult, science-fantasy, post-apocalyptic romance. They are the first two books in a trilogy. Both are published by Starflower Press. www.elizaserenarobinson.com*

Today, as I spent hours pointlessly procrastinating on the Internet, I came across a Twitter account called "FeministTaylorSwift". As a Swiftie (Taylor Swift fan), I was naturally apprehensive, but as a feminist I was intrigued. I know that a lot of feminists dislike Taylor Swift because some of her lyrics imply dependency upon men (for example, 'Romeo save me', or 'It turns out freedom was nothing but missing you'). Are these lyrics anti-feminist? I don't think they are.

**Feminism is the knowledge that we are capable, that we are responsible, and love is letting someone share in that responsibility.**

An example of a tweet on FeministTaylorSwift was 'We blocked the noise with the sound of / "I'm not dependent on you / But I love you and I would be very sad if you left"'. The actual lyrics from that song are 'We blocked the noise with the sound of I need you / And for the first time I had something to lose.'

Does the act of needing someone counteract our sense of individuality and capability? Does it counteract feminism? Does fearing losing someone mean we are not feminist?

To answer this, we must know what feminism is in the first place. Even women who appear to be feminists – such as Shailene Woodley, who I absolutely adore – confuse feminism with misandry. Misandry is hatred of/ prejudice against men/boys. Feminism is belief in equality for women, not a female-dominated society where men are objectified or enslaved and live in fear of the matriarchy.

*Finding our Truth | Feminism and the Knight*  
If feminism does not degrade men by bringing equality to women, then why do we see feminism and male/female relationships as working against each other? More specifically, why are we, as feminists, made to feel like we are betraying ourselves every time we let another person care for us? Are feminism and belief in happily-ever-afters mutually exclusive? Why must they be? Does the Knight in Shining Armour archetype simply amplify male domination, or does it show that men care for women? Must we give up being cared for in order to have independence and self-respect? Or can we find relationships where we can be looked after without demoting ourselves to Damsels in Distress?

Does love have to compromise our feminist beliefs? Does the need for another person detract from our strength as an individual? Which is greater in the end, beliefs or love? Or does love add to beliefs, rather than diminishing them?

Feminism does not mean an end to love, and love does not mean an end to feminism. Feminism means equality for women; it does not mean we must live our lives alone and never rely on anyone. Feminism is the knowledge that we are capable, that we are responsible, and love is letting someone share in that responsibility. Just because you can do everything alone, it doesn't mean that you have to, and it doesn't necessarily mean that you should.

But what is the line, and where do you draw it? When do you decide that no, this person is not your saviour, they are just another destroyer? Not every person wearing armour is a knight...appearance isn't everything.

In the end, we must respect ourselves first, and others second. When we find someone who respects us as much as they respect themselves...then that's it: that's the magic we've been looking for.

Is it a contradiction in terms to believe in the Knight in Shining Armour when you're a feminist? Well no, I don't think that's the case. Having a Knight in Shining Armour doesn't automatically make you a Damsel in Distress.

Ultimately, you are in control of your own archetype, and who's to say that you can't be the Knight? Women's roles are not just limited to being the Damsel in Distress or the Wicked Queen. Fairytales do not define us; their role is to mirror us, to show us the root of our nature. But they are not that root...we are. We define ourselves, we decide who we want to be, and our lives are defined by our choices. In the end, a person can only save us if we let them.

Sometimes the way you save someone isn't something major, something huge, something life-changing...sometimes it's the small things, such as talking to someone, smiling at them, letting them know that they're not alone, reminding them that they're human. Throughout our lives we are ignored, upset, stifled, betrayed, and this makes us forget who we truly are, forget that there are people out there who care, and when people acknowledge us, they are saving us in a way, because they are reminding us of our humanity, and therefore setting us free. By recognising the power of setting someone free, we can save ourselves, and to save oneself is the greatest form of saving there is.

But what about the destroyer; what is their role in all this? By destroying us are they saving us too? Are they the Wicked Queen to our Snow White? Do they send us into the arms of the Handsome Prince (via the Seven Dwarves)?

Why is it that we receive more criticism for accepting help than accepting defeat? Why do we live in a culture that praises the destroyer and shuns the destroyed and the saviour alike? This is not how it should be; we must work together, rather than working alone merely to protest the idea that we are better when we combine our strength with someone else's.

Humans are not meant to be solitary, if we were, we would be hermaphroditic so we could reproduce on our own and therefore not need other people. As we are not hermaphrodites, I can therefore conclude that we are not meant to be all alone. As I say this, I look forward to my bright future as a crazy cat-lady spinster, but I'm the exception, not the rule.

Fairytales do not define us;  
their role is to mirror us,  
to show us the root of our nature.  
But they are not that root...we are.



## Beauty is in the Ear



*beauty isn't only in the eye of the beholder,  
it's in the ear.*

by Paul Robinson

*Paul Robinson is a trained actor, singer and voice coach. The voice is one of his passions, about which he uses his quite a lot! He works face to face and by Skype, and can be contacted at [TheVoiceCoach@outlook.com](mailto:TheVoiceCoach@outlook.com)*

I used to think that as I got older, I'd become more accepting, tolerant – loving, even. But the reality is... if I had a pound for every time I've recently heard a voice that's made my toenails curl, I'd be booking a holiday – and a chiropodist.

I am a man of many parts, some of which still work! And in an effort to keep them working, I spend quite a lot of time at the gym. There are people of all shapes and sizes there, but almost all of us have two things in common. We're working out in order to improve our health – and to look our best, or at least somewhat better than we do at the moment. And this isn't confined to people who work out, or exercise in other ways. Most of us make an effort with what we wear, our hair; make-up is becoming less and less something

only worn by females; and cosmetic surgeons are laughing all the way to the bank.

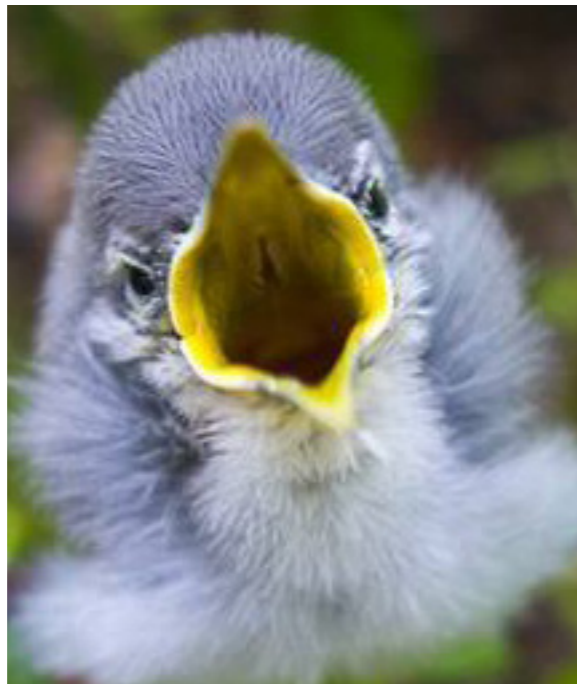
Appearance is big in our society. Form seems to matter more than substance. What we look like is deemed more important than who we are – in the same way that a lot of people want to be famous: not a good this or gifted that who becomes famous as a by-product of years of honing their talent, but just...famous. I'm staggered by the lengths to which some people will go to try to look good. And most miss the point that beauty is an inside job, and that if a person radiates love, joy, acceptance, generosity, or any number of other positive qualities, an inner glow will illuminate and enhance whatever is on the outside.

So that's the appearance, the 'look', which is the common obsession. But beauty isn't only in the eye of the beholder, it's in the ear. Recently at the gym (I must get a social life), I saw this madonna-ish woman who looked to me the epitome of attractive motherhood. And I don't mean she was wearing fishnet stockings and had conical boobs! As I was pointing her out to Veronika, I heard a

high-pitched, scraping, scratching sound. I looked around to see where it was coming from. I couldn't believe my eyes and ears. It was the madonna! Based on her appearance, I had expected a voice that purred, or at least a warm one – not someone with irritable vowel syndrome!

It was the contrast between the look and the sound that highlighted this, but the voice doesn't have to come from a madonna or an Adonis to assault my ears. What I can't get my head around is that most of us are conditioned to try and improve our visual appearance, one way or another, but our auditory appearance is another matter! Visually, we have mirrors, shop windows, cameras – even a still-water pond – to remind us of how we look. But where is the auditory equivalent of the mirror. The Alps? I know some people avoid mirrors, but not as many as avoid listening to a recording of their own voice.

I wonder why this is? Is it because life is so full and busy for most of us, that having something else to concern or even worry ourselves about is just too daunting? Fair enough! But those people who do put some thought and effort into how they sound are giving themselves an advantage. Nearly all of us want to be considered attractive. And what is sexier than an ear-catching voice? And it's not just the personal life which can benefit – the romance and the bromance – the professional life can, too. Your prospects in job and university interviews would be improved. And if your work requires you to speak a lot, or especially if you're in a situation where you have to project the voice in a large space – such as teaching or coaching, or if you have to speak a lot over noise, the stamina and quality of the voice can be enhanced. And although this doesn't apply to all jobs, most people will find themselves in situations at and outside of work where their voices will need to be



raised. If an untrained voice has to be raised, this will put strain on the vocal apparatus, and the sound coming out of the speaker's mouth – even if their conversational voice is normally pleasant – will almost certainly be hard on the ear of the listener. 'Come 'ere Josh, or I'll smack thi backside!' What's more, after vocal training, your communication skills would be better, because you'd be speaking more clearly, and would probably have more self-confidence because you'd know you sound good: authoritative, even.

Over the past 40-or-so years, there's been a change in what's considered 'normal' and 'acceptable' in speech. Accents are heard much more on TV and radio. To me, this is a good thing, as it reflects the audience. I like

the sound of most accents, but not necessarily the voices which speak them. And if you think that I'm being 'accentish', read on. The same applies to the BBC news, which I watch and listen to quite a lot. Most of the presenters speak with what might be thought of as unaccented English – what is sometimes known as standard English or received pronunciation. And the majority of those people have voices which could be improved enormously with good vocal training. Although

they have what some would consider posh voices, the actual sound they make is quite hard on the ear, and in some cases, unpleasant. It's interesting to listen to a news report starting with voice over a video clip. This is normally done close to the microphone, which means there's not so much stress on the voice. But then, they'll cut to a piece where the same reporter is speaking to camera, perhaps over some background noise. The result is almost always a strangled tone. Why? Because they have to project their voice more, and they haven't been trained to do it properly. The extra air pressure, used to increase the volume, leads to constriction of the throat and

mouth. It's rather like the difference between an unamplified electric and an acoustic guitar. The former can only be heard at close quarters, whereas the latter, because of its large resonator, will have a pleasant tone, which carries. The human voice's resonators are the pharynx (above the throat), the mouth, and the nasal passages. Often, the mouth and pharynx are constricted, so there isn't much room for resonance. So if someone with such a voice (most people) tries to be heard above conversational level, they push hard on their vocal apparatus, rather like someone pulling the strings violently on an unamplified electric guitar. The result is a harsh sound. We'd certainly expect professionals to do better than that, after all, their voices are important tools of their trade. Would we expect a dentist to use a blunt drill? Or a coal man to have holes in the bottom of his sack? The sack is probably what he'd get.

The words 'projecting' and 'to project' come up a lot in vocal training. Actors are taught this skill - or should be. The idea is to be able to appear naturalistic in your speech when acting, whether you're in a close-up shot, on a small stage, or even in a large outdoor arena. As the demands on the voice increase, so will the volume used by the actor. But because he or she remains relaxed and keeps the throat and mouth as open as is necessary, the actor doesn't shout, but increases the amount of breath used to the appropriate amount – in the same way they would if they were playing a wind instrument. The result should be that the audience is unaware of this technical accomplishment, as the actor speaks with ease.

And this doesn't just apply to actors and broadcasters. Whatever a person's accent is (including 'posh'), it's possible to speak in a way that is either pleasing to the ear, or the opposite. The choice is up to the individual. If this rings a bell with you, listen to the voices around you and in the media. Is it a pleasant experience? Record your own voice to see what you think about it. And remember that vocal training doesn't mean that you have to lose your accent: that's a choice, too. What it leads to is clearer speech and a more pleasant sound. It's an enhancement and an advantage

which takes hard work, awareness and focus; but the effort is well worth it.

"Good English, spoken and written well, will open more doors than a college degree. Bad English will slam doors you didn't even know existed." (William Raspberry: Pulitzer-Prize-winning American columnist, and Knight Professor of the Practice of Communications and Journalism at the Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University.)

**Tips:** Making the most of your speaking voice is as complex as learning to sing well. Like anything else that you take seriously, guidance and effort are needed. The main thing to develop is awareness of your own voice and other people's. Try recording yourself speaking. Hearing the playback is always a bit of a shock. For one thing, we don't hear ourselves in everyday life as others do. This is because whereas others hear us through sound waves in their ears, we hear those same airborne waves, but in addition, we hear our voice conducted directly into the ear. So when we hear the recording - especially if it's of ourselves in conversation, when we're not on our 'best' vocal behaviour, it normally makes us cringe.

Awareness is very important. Where possible keep half an ear on how you're sounding. Speak as quietly as is appropriate in any given circumstances. This means you'll be putting as little pressure as possible on your vocal apparatus, so it will sound less strained than it otherwise would. Practise on your own. Sing a little bit, to warm up your voice. Try speaking quietly to an imagined person about a yard in front of you. Keep extending the distance between you and your imaginary friend. When speaking to them, the volume will inevitably increase the further away they are; but try to keep the same 'flavour' to your tone. Be as relaxed as you can; this reduces any stress that there may be in your voice.

The main thing is not to be discouraged; Rome wasn't built in a day. Record yourself from time to time to monitor your progress.

# NEW!

from Starflower Press

**Cycle to the Moon: Celebrating the Menstrual Trinity ~ menarche, menstruation, menopause.**

This celebration of the Moontime is for anyone wishing to consciously embrace their flow, ease menstrual symptoms, and understand their sacred femininity.

Written by Veronika Sophia Robinson; illustrated by Susan Merrick.

ISBN 978-0-9575371-4-9



[www.starflowerpress.com](http://www.starflowerpress.com)